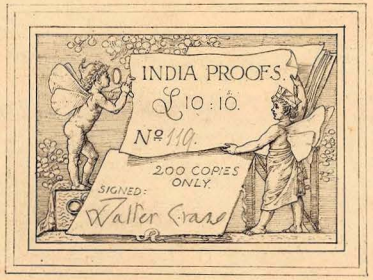
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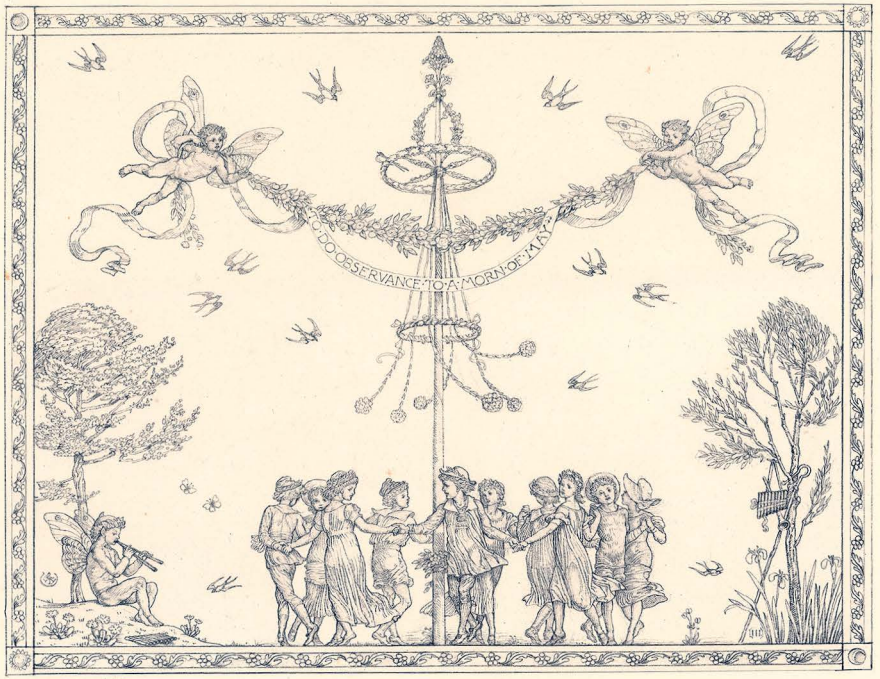
THE FIRST
OF MAY

TO

CHARLES DARWIN

FROM THE AUTHOR & THE ARTIST

ὁ Κόσμος ἀλλοίωσις, ὁ βίος ὑπόληψις.


DOOBSERVANCE TO A MORN OF MAY

THE
FIRST·OF·MAY;
A
FAIRY MASQVE;
PRESENTED·IN·A·SERIES·
·OF·52·DESIGNS·BY·
WALTER CRANE
LONDON:
HENRY SOTHERAN & CO:
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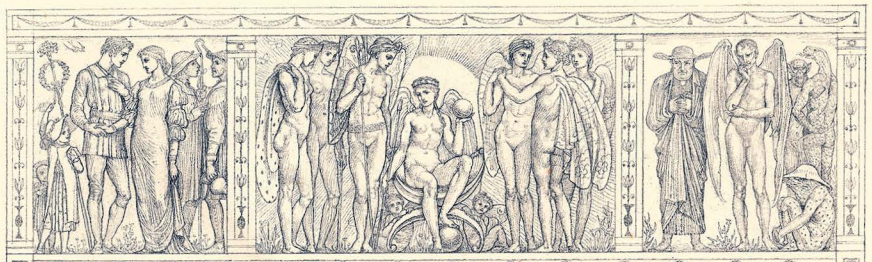


CHARACTERS

ANGELICA. *Queen of the Fairies.*

ROBINET. *Chief Fairy verderer of Rosedale Forest.*

Fairies, Woodwards of Rosedale Forest.
- EYEBRIGHT.
- LADYBIRD.
- MELILOT.
- SPEEDWELL.
- DAFFODIL.

GOLDENHAIR. *Fairy page to Queen Angelica.*

LAUREO. *in love with Lilian.*

LILIAN. *The Queen of May.*

MANDRAKE. *an evil spirit.*

ADDERSTONGUE, CANKER, TOADSTOOL. *Evil spirits, attendants on Mandrake.*

MARJOY.

TATTLE, DRY. *Rustics.*

SHEPHERDS & SHEPHERDESSES.

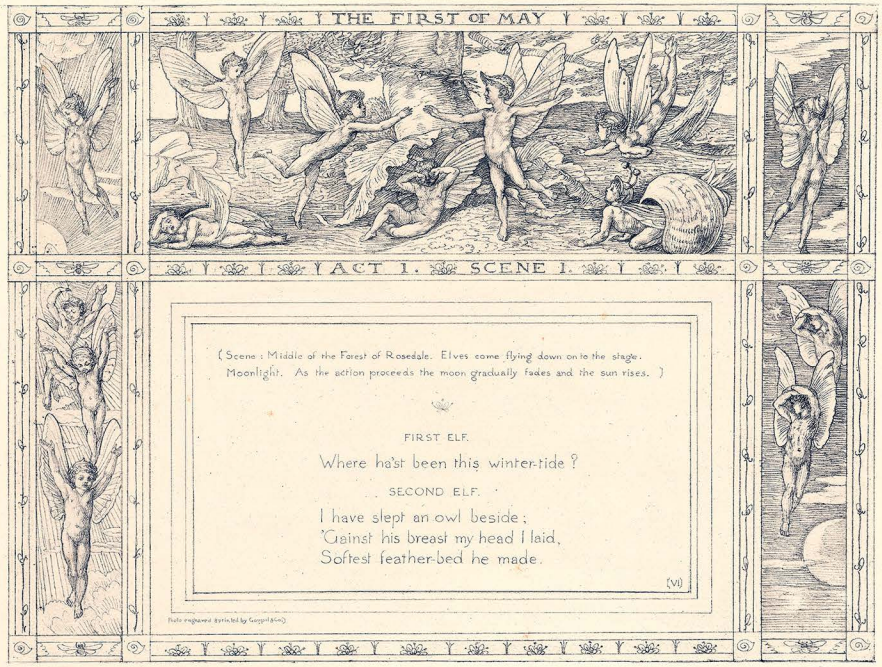
CHILDREN.

FAIRIES, ELVES & IMPS.

M

Photo-engraved & printed by Goupil & Co.)

SCENE. *The Forest of Rosedale.*



{ Scene : Middle of the Forest of Rosedale. Elves come flying down on to the stage. Moonlight. As the action proceeds the moon gradually fades and the sun rises. }

FIRST ELF.

Where ha'st been this winter-tide ?

SECOND ELF.

I have slept an owl beside ;
'Gainst his breast my head I laid,
Softest feather-bed he made.

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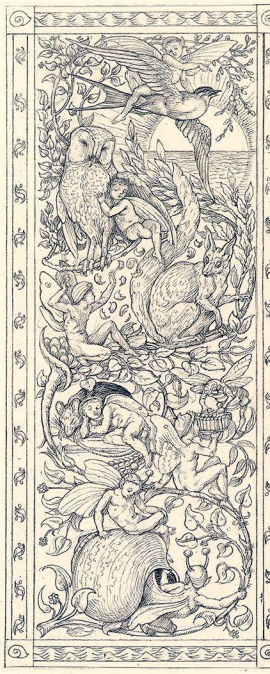

THIRD ELF.

Swallow me the ocean o'er,
Silver-breasted courser bore;
Where the sun went there went we,
Made four Seasons Graces three.

FOURTH ELF.

I in squirrel's storehouse crept,
Cracked his filberts whilst he slept;
Sang and danced as came the whim,
Then with nutshells pelted him.

FIFTH ELF.

First I lodged with brown field-mouse,
Crushed my wings so small his house;
So I went to humble-bee,
Honey-comb and mead gave me.

SIXTH ELF.

Two of us a snail-shell took,
Which its owner snail forsook;—
Like round onyx hollow blown,
Or a grape turned into stone.

FIRST ELF.

But hark! here comes our Queen Angelica.

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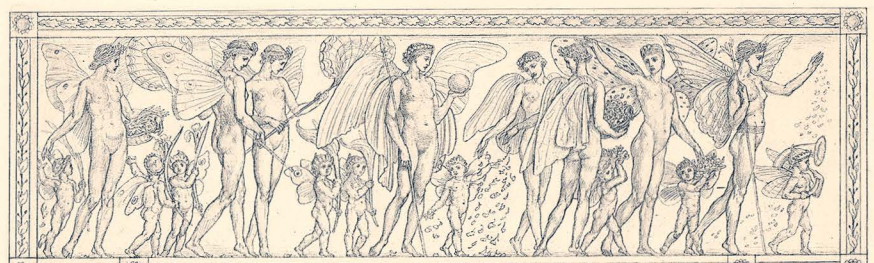

[Enter Fairies led by Robinet, Ladybird, Speedwell and Eyebright, heralding Angelica and all her Court.]

ANGELICA.

You fairy woodwards and you verderers,
Guards of my forests and my lawns and glades,
Dear Robinet, Speedwell and Ladybird,
Eyebright and Melilot and Daffodil;
And you my Elves, you buds who never grow
To flowers, eternal babes of Fairyland,
Too long we have our Court delayed to hold
Beneath these antique towers of beech and oak,

[VIII]

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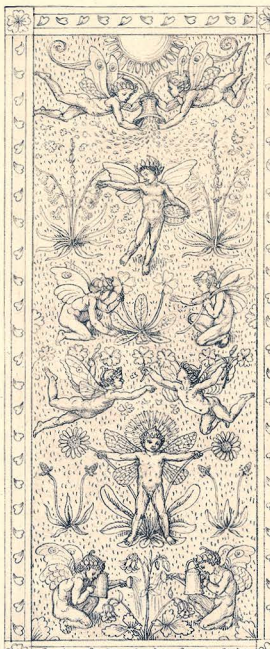

And so the song of Spring is out of tune;
The lark, the laureate of the birds by day,
Is dumb, and sleeps the sleepless nightingale,
The heavenlier laureate of the birds by night;
Nor breaks the bud on tree with emerald spark,
Nor opes one little flower a petal's breadth,
But on the Forest falls a mayless May.
Quick then, my Fairies, to your fairy tasks,
Quick! make the Spring's green wave break o'er the fields,
And, as it breaks, burst in a surge of flowers,
Sweeping right on through woods with primroses,
And bluebells rippling in the fresh May breeze.

ROBINET.

Liege Queen, by yon full moon that sinks apace,
Already 'gins to dawn the First of May,
And village swains will shortly seek the Green,
To keep with dance their yearly festival;
And Lilian, who's betrothed to Laureo,
Lilian the Good, Lilian the Beautiful,
Was chosen yesterday the Queen of May;
But Mandrake plots,—

ANGELICA.

I know that Mandrake well,
Of all the fiends the cruellest flight who wings;
So he bears Lilian spite!

(ix)

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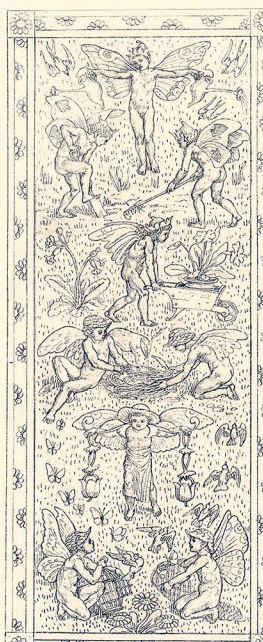


ROBINET.

Spite! bitter spite:
For he has sworn an oath, that of Life's prize,
—And marriage is the maiden's prize of life,—
He'ill thwart her. Therefore we must counsel take.
And crush his plot, nor single moment lose,—
For hate is twice as strong and swift as love;
Hate to the veriest coward courage breathes,
Hate to the veriest dullard wisdom gives.

ANGELICA.

What! you afraid that ill can conquer good?

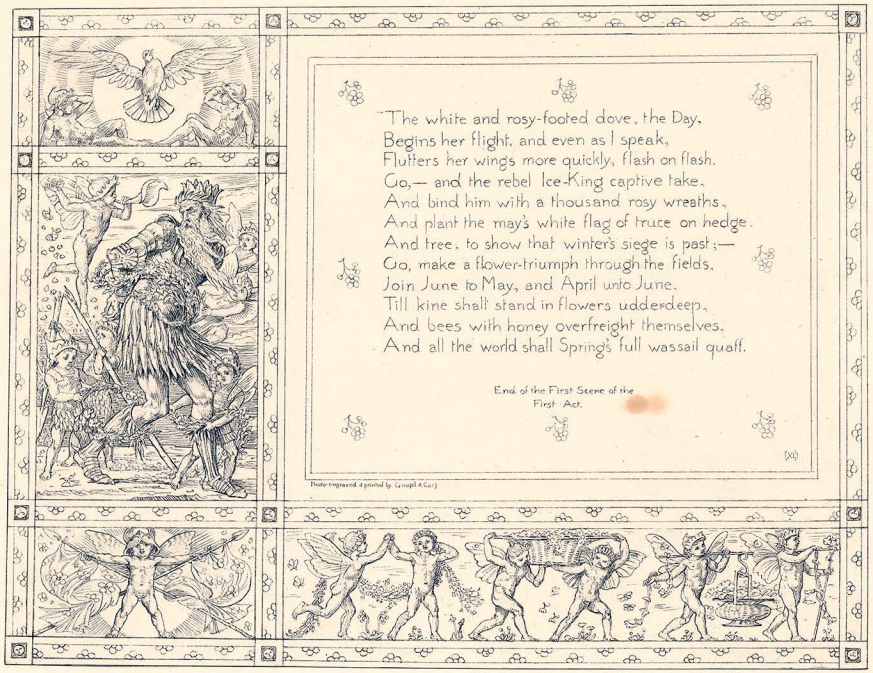
ROBINET.

Afraid! yes, sore afraid: for in man's world of woe
The law smiles on the rich and frowns upon the poor;
'Tis violence, selfishness, lies, calumnies
And fraud wax gross, whilst truth and virtue starve.
The poor are weak, the weak are always wrong;
'Tis the strong bad men thrive in every age,
The laurelled burglars of the grief-filled world.

ANGELICA.

Another time I'll show how false your creed:
Know this,—no man can do another harm,
But for himself works weal or woe, to store
That treasure-house of weal or woe, the mind.
But come! go ply your tasks,—See in the East

(Photo-engraved & printed by Gough & Co.)



"The white and rosy-footed dove, the Day,
Begins her flight, and even as I speak,
Flutters her wings more quickly, flash on flash.
Go,— and the rebel Ice-King captive take,
And bind him with a thousand rosy wreaths,
And plant the may's white flag of truce on hedge,
And tree, to show that winter's siege is past;—
Go, make a flower-triumph through the fields,
Join June to May, and April unto June,
Till kine shall stand in flowers udderdeep,
And bees with honey overfreight themselves,
And all the world shall Spring's full wassail quaff.

End of the First Scene of the
First Act.

(XI)

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ACT I SCENE II

(Scene. Outskirts of Rosedale Forest. Early morning. Enter Lilian.)

LILIAN.

Ne'er broke such morning on the First of May!
It came as comes some palmer 'cross the hills,
Who in his hand a budding palm branch bears,
Which as he bears, touched with the breath of Spring,
Quick into silver buds and blossoms breaks,
Then quick from silver turns to flossy gold,
Then quick from gold spreads into whitest down,—
So broke the morning o'er a thousand hills.

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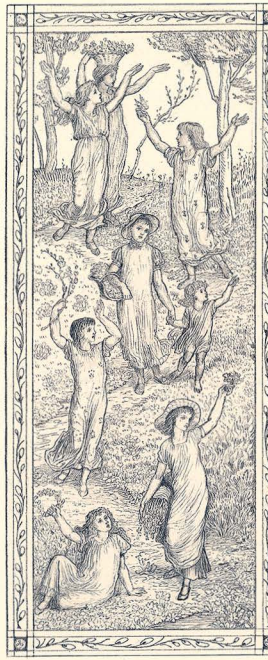

(Voices of children are heard singing in the Forest, etc.)

SONG OF THE CHILDREN.

Merrily, merrily let us sing,
This is the daybreak of the spring;
Primroses on the hill-sides born,
Break with a golden flower-dawn;
Whilst the cuckoo-buds and broom
Race the furze which next shall bloom,
Merrily, merrily let us sing,
This is the daybreak of the spring.

LILIAN.

Those are my children singing in the wood,
As is their wont, to greet the First of May:
Betimes this morn they rose to gather flowers,
Before a single streak glowed in the East,
As big as glows the fire-streak on the wren.
But I must go, a subject ere a Queen,
And see all's ready for our festival.

(Exit Lilian singing "Merrily, merrily." Enter Tattle and Dry.)

TATTLE.

The Forest will be all alive to-day,
There'ill music be, and children singing songs,
And dancing round the Maypole in a ring.—

(Children's voices are again heard singing in the Forest.)

Photo-engraved & printed by Goupil & Co.

SONG OF THE CHILDREN.

Hark! Hark!
The angel-throated lark
Begins his lay;
And blackbird, erst so mute,
Pipes on his golden flute,
And wakes the may.
Hark! Hark!

TATTLE.

Now there's a song! now dont you like that song?

(Dry expresses signs of dissent.)

Not like that song! you are so hard to please;
What do you like? do you the Fairies like,
For they to-day in Rosedale hold their sports?

(Dry expresses signs of disbelief.)

What! not believe that there are Fairies here!
We are quite certain that there Fairies are,
Because we see their rings.

DRY.

As well might say
That there are ghosts, because we see their graves.

TATTLE.

Who made the rings then if the Fairies didn't?

DRY.

Who made the horse-shoes if the horses didn't?

Photo-engraved & printed by Comyn & Co.

(Re-enter Lilian.)

LILIAN.

You foolish swains, why loiter here like this?
The flower-crowned May breathes life in everything;
The woods stand bathed branch-deep in hyacinth seas,
The may's bright frostwork silvers every hedge,
On banks the coral of the orchis glows,
And e'en the clouds like may-trees blossom out,
As, if the heavens, too, kept a First of May;
Come, let the May breathe also life in you,
See! there is money, go and ribands buy.

(Exit Lilian singing "Merrily, merrily".)

TATTLE. (Counting the money.)

Now that is something like. I only wish
The First of May would somewhat oftener come.
And then besides there'ill be the players here:
How I do love to see the actresses!
I do so much a lovely woman love!

DRY.

Keep from a lovely woman far away,
And do not go too near an ugly one.

TATTLE.

Think you they are as lovely as they look?

DRY.

I can a bullock judge, a horse or sheep,
But not a Christian.

TATTLE. A Christian!

Photo-engraved & printed by Gentil & Cox

I've heard that actresses were'n't Christians.

DRY.

That is old Marjoy's tale, who is so good,
His hens will not upon a Sunday lay.

{Marjoy is peeping in on one side, as Lilian re-enters on the other.}

LILIAN.

What! still, still talking here, you foolish swains,
You will forsooth be late, make haste and go;
Soon will the children round the Maypole dance,
Some crowned with bluebells, some with primroses,
As if the rainbow's colours they'd unwove,
And twined each bright list singly in their hair;
Come, come, as you won't go, I'll drive you on.

{Exit Lilian driving Tattle and Dry before her, and enter Marjoy who has been peeping in and listening.}

MARJOY.

That's me, that's me they mean who am so good,
My hens will not upon a Sunday lay:
I am so good; the world's too gay for me;
The cypress has for me too gay a look,
The raven has for me too gay a song,—

{Children's voices are again heard singing in the distance.}

Photo-engraved & printed by Gemmell & Co.

SONG OF THE CHILDREN.

All Nature goes a-Maying,
All Nature goes a-Maying;
The moth its mask of sleep lays by,
And butterfly with butterfly,
And bird with bird go Maying;
All Nature goes a-Maying,
All Nature goes a-Maying.

MARJOY.

There's vice! But I will not permit such things,
I'll Nature not allow to Maying go.

(Exit Marjoy.)

End of the Second Scene
of the
First Act.

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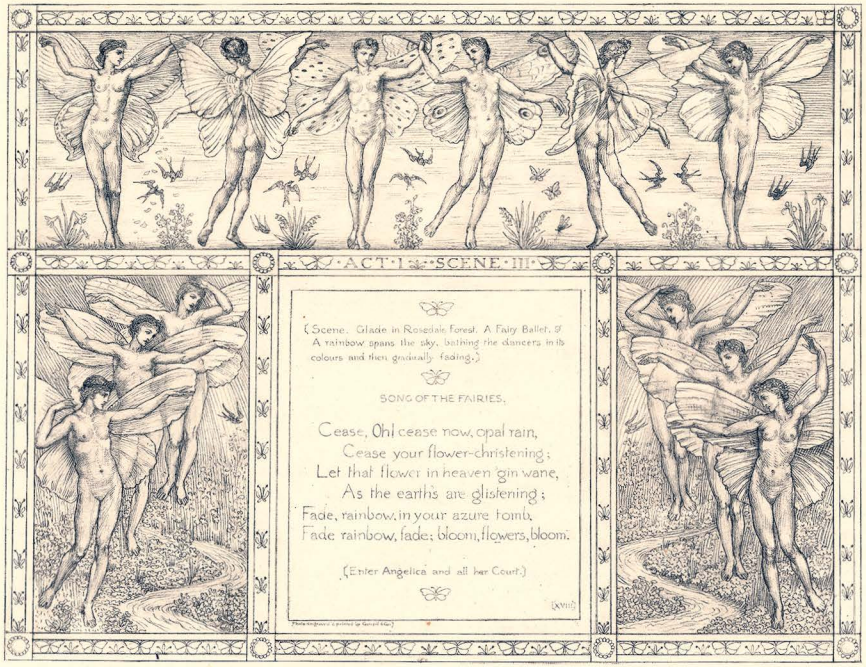
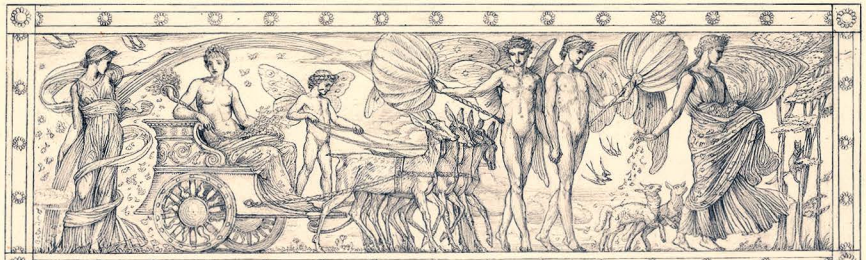

ACT I SCENE III
(Scene. Glade in Rosedale Forest. A Fairy Ballet. A rainbow spans the sky, bathing the dancers in its colours and then gradually fading.)
SONG OF THE FAIRIES.
Cease, Oh! cease now, opal rain,
Cease your flower-christening;
Let that flower in heaven 'gin wane,
As the earths are glistening;
Fade, rainbow, in your azure tomb,
Fade rainbow, fade; bloom, flowers, bloom.
(Enter Angelica and all her Court.)



ANGELICA.

Fairies and elves! have you my hests fullilled?
Have you the gates of Beauty open flung,
To let the pageant of the Spring pass through,
With all her train of leaping, laughing life,
And all her carnival of birds and flowers?

ROBINET.

Liege Queen, all your commands have been obeyed:
I saw them pass, but a short moment since,
Through yonder arch, white-kirtled May and hand
In hand, the twins, the West wind and the South,
And next, clad all in sunshine and in smiles,
The Spring, whose shadow is a thousand flowers;

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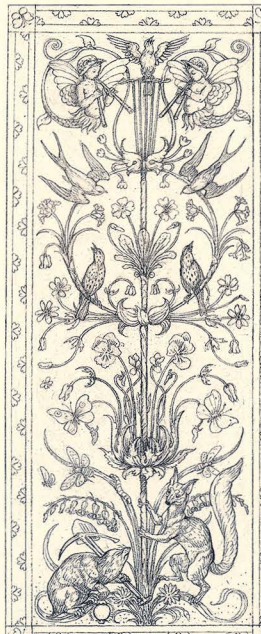

Then all the daisy-buds, hid in eclipse,
Flashed through the grass their golden moons full-orbed;
Then leapt the squirrel, woke the miner mole,
And on his first spring voyage sailed the bee,
And chaffinch wove her lichen-tinselled nest.

SONG OF THE ELVES.

All you bid us, Queen, is done,—
Through the Forest May's begun;
Carols all the wood with song,
Music blooms with flowers along;
Swallows, joyous in the light,
Flash,—mute songs,—in rythmic flight.
All the glades with primrose set,
Dark and pale blue violet;
White ones also and that other,—
Pansy, violet's elder brother;
Bluebells, oxlips and windflower,
Lovechild of the sun and shower;
Celandines with twinkling ray,
As if glowworms shone by day;
Whilst in sunshine bathed, flits by,
Flying flower, the butterfly.

Photo-engraved & printed by Goupil & Co.

ANGELICA.

Thanks for the way you have my hests fulfilled,
And for the care you've shown my birds and flowers;
But 'mongst the flowers the roses you've forgot,
From which our Forest takes its name, Rosedale,—
The sweet May-roses, which 'bove all I love,
Whose leaf than other flowers far sweeter smells.

ROBINET.

Liege Queen, Oh! I remember well the morn,
On which you did create that rose of May,—
How all athirst we to a fountain came,
Hardby the torso of a shattered oak,
Whose roots had pleached their woodwork round the well,
From which flowed out a stream, that from above
Looked, through the leaves, a bit of wandering sky;
And hastening down,—it was a First of May,—
A bramble tore your cheek and made it bleed,
And you cried out,—"My vengeance I will take;
This briar shall ever flower upon this day,
But there shall grow no thorns upon its stem,
To scratch again the hands or face of maid,
But all its flowers shall bloom fair as my cheeks,
And all its leaves smell fragrant as my breath,—
Thus takes a Queen revenge upon a briar."
And under this sweet-curse that rose-tree blooms

Photo-engraved & printed by Goupil & Co.

To-day, and ever on the First of May,
Thornless, sweet-leaved, and white-and-vermeil-flowered.
And from its flowers I've wove a score of wreaths
Or more, and laid them down beside the fount;
And one I wove more richly than the rest,
With this inscription,—"FOR THE QUEEN OF MAY;"
And ere I left the place, the children came,
And found the May-rose wreaths, and found the one
With this inscription,—"FOR THE QUEEN OF MAY;"
And shouted out, "This for the Queen of May."
But as I lately told you, Mandrake plots
Against the Queen of May, dear Lilian,
She with the lips 'twixt ruby and the rose,
And eyes 'twixt violet and forgetmenot,
And hair 'twixt primrose and the daffodil.

ANGELICA.

But has she manners, gentle courtesy?
For manners are the mind made visible,
Echoes of past, heralds of future deeds;
For gentle manners are not made but born,
And though the lark may hatch the cuckoo's egg,
It ne'er can teach the foster bird to sing.

ROBINET.

Sweet manners has she, gentle courtesy,
Which far transcend her lips and eyes and hair,
As its high vassal Colour Form transcends.

Photo-engraved & printed by Goupil & Cie.

But sorrow soon shall on her beauty prey,
Shall blanch the rose and ruby of her lips,
Drown the soft violets of her eyes with tears,
And tarnish all the primrose of her hair.
There's nought on earth that tastes not bitterness;
Man's life is crushed with care and broke with woe,
And e'en his love is sorrow in disguise,
A bit of short delightful misery.

ANGELICA.

My Robinet, you shall not plead in vain,
For kindness is the Fairies' chivalry;
Not ours the clash of helmet-shivering spears,
But tourney of good deeds in silence done.
Ho! Goldenhair, where wander you to-day?

(Goldenhair comes flying down.)

GOLDENHAIR.

Hither, hither down I fly,
Beauty's unarmed knight am I,
From my citadel the sky;

Where the year is ever May,
And where Virtue sheds such ray,
That she turns the night to day.

Photo-engraved & printed by Goupil & Co.

ANGELICA.

You know the fir-black dell where Mandrake dwells,
And plots his schemes amidst his crew of imps,
Forms like to men, with faces like the brutes,
Such demon power holds sin o'er everything:
For sin can into serpent turn the dove,
And change its white down back again to scales;
Go quick, and learn that villain's latest plot,
Note well his words, and back return with speed.

GOLDENHAIR.

Winter's snowflake, light you fall,
But I will lighter go:
Summer's snowflake, light you fly,
But I will lighter go;
For kindness is far lighter-winged than snow,
Far lighter-winged than gossamer or snow.

(Goldenhair flies away on her errand.)

ANGELICA.

Dear Robinet, soon shall we know the truth;
But Mandrake's plots need never cause us fear;
Hate though she's keenest-eyed yet still is blind,
And though she's strongest-armed yet still is weak;
For Hate enlists lies, slanders, calumnies,

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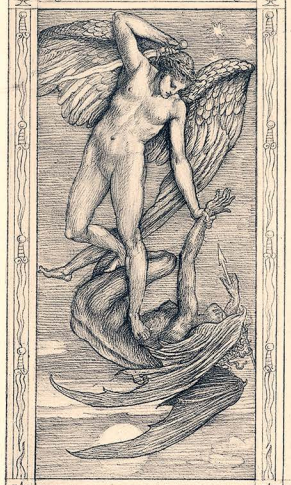

And all the troops which wall-eyed passion rears,
Who serve a day, then 'gainst their lord revolt.
But e'en if Fraud and Force, twin Gods on earth,
Sat ne'er so firmly on their brazen thrones,
Still Justice lives, who though she's slow of wing,
Yet circling round afar, from unseen heights
At last swoops down, sword-crashing through her prey.

End of the First Act.

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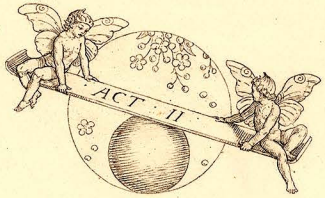
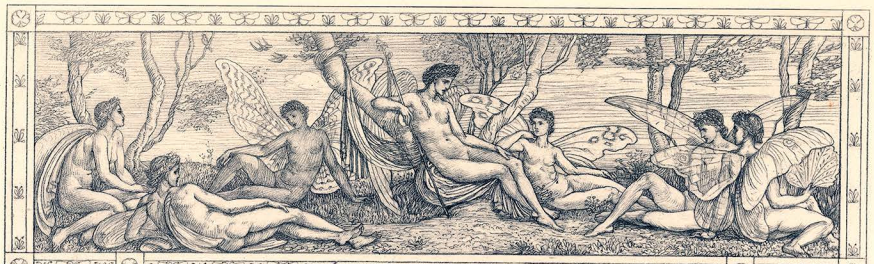

ACT II



ACT II. SCENE 1.

(Scene. A glade in the Forest of Rosedale. Fairies with their Queen.)

SONG OF THE FAIRIES.

Merry, merry let us be,
Underneath the greenwood tree;
Watch the butterfly take wing,
Newborn angel of the Spring;
Hear him tell a lover's tale,
That winged poet nightingale;
Whilst the blossoms all unfold,
Richest missals blue and gold.

(XXVII)

Photo-Engraved & printed by Goupil & Cie.)

ANGELICA.

Has Goldenhair returned?

ROBINET.

Not yet, liege Queen:
But I some news have heard of Mandrake's plots
Gainst Laureo and fairest Lilian;—
But see! here Lilian comes to keep love's tryst.

[Enter Lilian. The Fairies hide themselves.]

LILIAN.

Now know I what love means,— to love's to live.
To feel the hunger of the soul appeased,
In having found the prize of nobleness,
A noble man, whose love is truth itself,
This is to love,—to lead a higher life.
And yet I know not how my love has grown;
It sprang as springs this flower at my feet,
Which blooms so bright, as if it were no flower.
But flake of sunshine into flower turned:
Perchance may fade as fades this primrose flower;
No, no, this love of mine's of virtue born,
Virtue which always dowers love with youth,
Virtue which through the deepest grief still wears
A primrose at her heart;—but hark! his step.

[Enter Laureo.]

LAUREO.

The masque of life its varying dance renews,
And all the masquers freshest beauty wear,

Photo-engraved & printed by Sampson & Co.

Unto law's stately music keeping time;—

(Sees Lilian.)

Oh! morn of May, and you, my Queen of May,
See! how all Nature teems with youth and joy,
How each thing loves and is again beloved,
The bee that loves the flower, the flower the light,
The light that loves and is beloved by all,
So I love you, my love, my flower, my light.

LILIAN.

You, too, to me are flower and love and light;
Those crystal-footed lovers of the moon,
The waves, ne'er followed her with such true love,
As my thoughts wait on you, my love, my light.

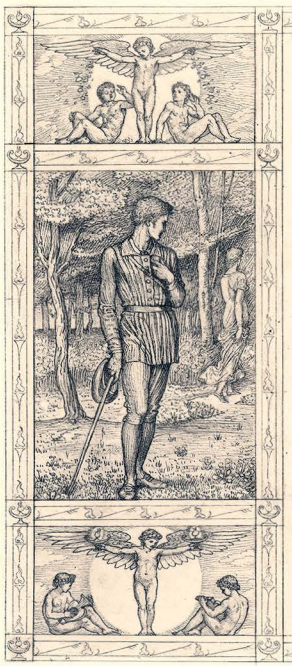
LAUREO.

By all the beauty of this beauteous wood,
By all these flowers which overhang the grass,
By all these trees which overhang the flowers,
And by the sky which overhangs them all,
I here to you pledge my eternal love.

LILIAN.

Oh! I could stay from morn to dewy eve,
From eve to night, from night to dewy morn,
To hear those words again, and once again,
And yet again, and never, never tire;
But now must homeward, dear one, turn my steps;
This morn, you know, I am the Queen of May,
And all my pretty subjects, children fair,

Photo-engraved & printed by Goupil & Co.



Staunch little Royalists, now wait for me:—
Within an hour we'll meet upon the Green.

[Exit Lilian.]

LAUREO.

Speech to the dumb, and music to the deaf,
Eyes to the blind, and benison to all,
Oh! Love, thou art the light of all this world,
And where thou goest shines eternal day,
And those the farthest off thou mak'st most near;
So though my love is gone, my light's not gone;
My love shines on me with eternal light,
And though she's absent still is present here.

[Points to his breast. Exit Laureo. The Fairies reappear.]

ROBINET.

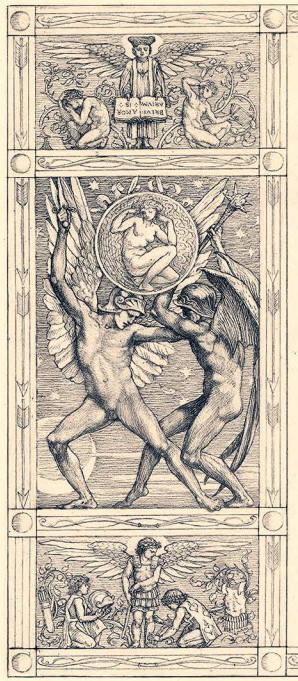
Did ever lovers love so well and true?
Yet love may be o'erthrown by lying tongues,
And constancy by slander overcome.

ANGELICA.

The lying tongue harms nothing but itself;
And slander ever by its own hand dies.
And love's not love which is by these dethroned;
For love is not, as mortal fools misthink,
The child of vermeil lips and starry eyes,
But bred in minds whose pulses beat in tune.

ROBINET.

Who enters in Love's University,
Must graduate through such a course of trials,



Struggles and griefs, that he as well might go
A soldier to the wars, for love's a war
Cramful of hatreds, jealousies and fears.
Two powers rule this earth, one good, one ill,
Which ebb and flow, and ceaseless battle wage:
And Mandrake uses, to fulfill his ends,
That greatest power of good or ill,— woman;
To-day the players to the forest come,
As is their wont, to keep the First of May;
And 'mongst them Mandrake has an actress found,
And guerdoned her with laughter, dimples, smiles,
And sighs that are half smiles, love's armoury;
Has with such summer-lightnings lit her eyes,
And winged their flashes with so true an aim;
And edged her speech with such a sparkling wit,
That she 'ill bewitch young Laureo from his love.

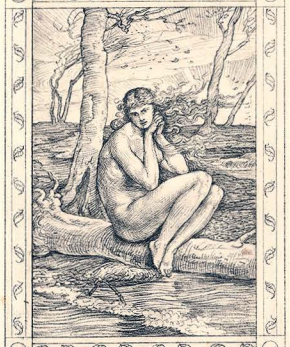
ANGELICA.

Rare gifts to capture easy-dazzled minds!
But if she owned a thousand times these charms,
You overrate her power for doing ill.

ROBINET.

I overrate her power no jot too much.
Perchance you've known some beauteous Autumn day,
Heiress to all the summer's garnered wealth,
When beeches fountains fling of leafy gems,

Photolithographed & printed by Griggs & Co.



And birches silent pour cascades of gold,
The sunset crimson-plumed, and o'er the land
Such hazy glamour brooding everywhere,
That fools cry out, another Summer dawns;
But wise men shake their heads and prophecy.
This beauty bodes no good, 'twill weather breed;
And in its train hard follow storm and wreck,
Woods in one night stripped bankrupt of their gold,
And heaven's crimson plumes to tempests turned,—
Such is her beauty breeding wreck to men.

ANGELICA.

Dear Robinet, you somewhat speak too rash,
For beauty in this world did never wrong,
For what is wrong can ne'er be beautiful.
But beauty's dower can Mandrake give to none,
For beauty is truth's image perfect made,
Shrined in the mirror of the perfect mind.

ROBINET.

Have you not oftimes watched our little elves,
Chase through the summer fields the summer's bird,
Their next-of kin, the gem-winged butterfly,
And after many a fall o'er hedge and ditch,
They catch their prize, but all the colour's dimmed,
And dead is all the bright blue diamond bloom,
Such is man's chase for beauty in the world.
Or worse, alas! he will take foul for fair,

Photo-engraved & printed by Grenzel & Co.

And ugliness for beauty oft mistakes,
So to the ruin of a thousand hearts,
This actress blazons beauty's counterfeit.

ANGELICA.

But is this Laureo of such metal made,
That he to all his vows will give the lie,
And to the first fair temptress yield he meets?

ROBINET.

If 'twere but mortal beauty I'd not fear,
But 'gainst this Mandrake he's not fairly matched.

ANGELICA.

He who obeys the God within his breast,
His conscience, by the act becomes a God;
And he who rules himself rules over all,
And he who fears himself need no one fear;—
But see! here flying comes my Goldenhair,
Poised like the swallow when she sidelong dips,
And shows her white breast gleaming 'gainst the wind;
And now she's here: what news bear you, my knight?

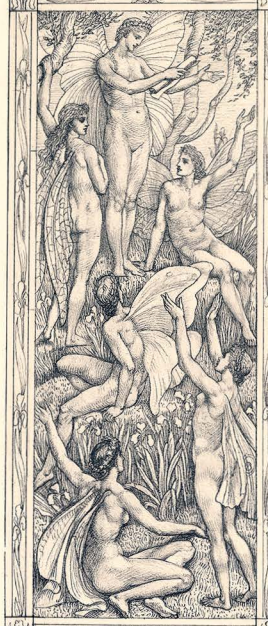
(Goldenhair comes flying down.)

GOLDENHAIR.

Liege Queen, all kinds of news for you I bear;
Not Mandrake's plots, but other plots
Are rife and ripe, as you will see by this.

(Hands Angelica a scroll.)

Plate engraved & printed by Conrad & Co.)



ANGELICA.

[After reading the scroll]

Right worthily have you your task performed;
Come then since others plot, we'll counterplot;
We'll first use simple means, but should they fail,
We'll try a sterner medicine afterwards;
What say you, Fairies, to a harmless joke?

[The Fairies signify their assent.]

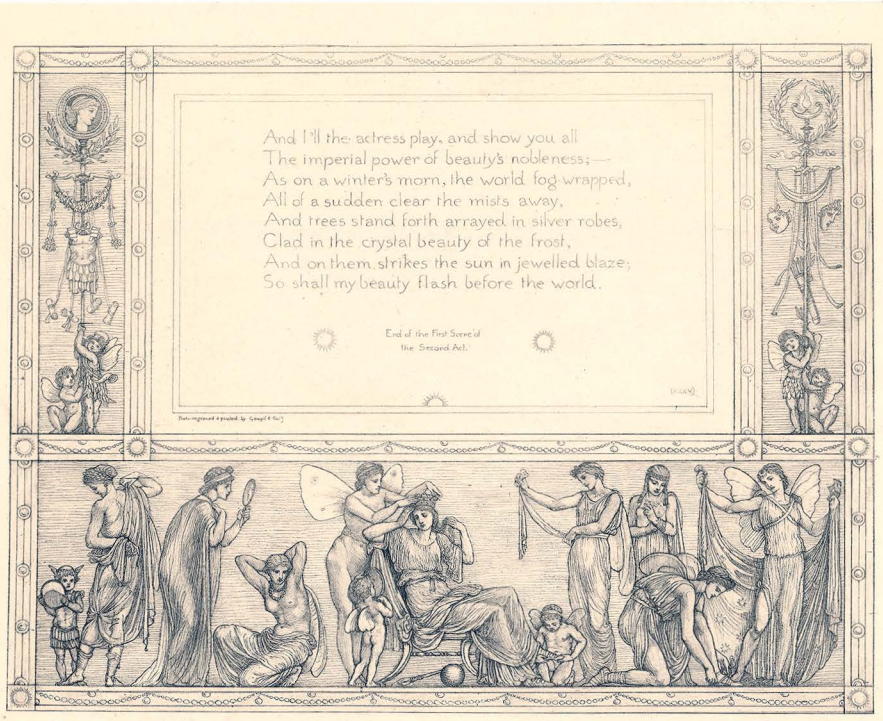
ROBINET.

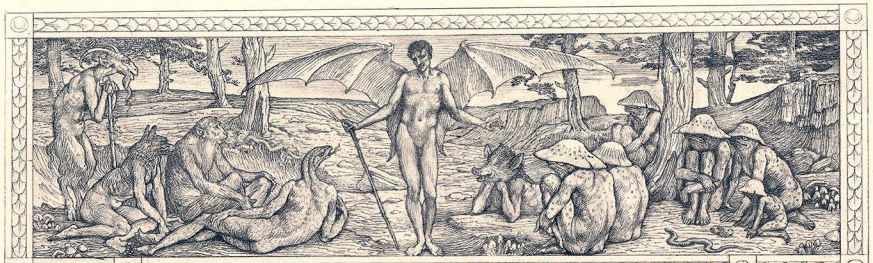
I say there's nothing better than a joke,
Whose salt unto the good is very sweet,
Whose sweetness to the bad is very salt.

ANGELICA.

Then, Fairies, hark! a hypocrite there is,
A saintly hypocrite, Marjoy by name,—
Who thinks that ugliness is virtue's badge,
Whereas 'tis both the flower and fruit of sin;
Who rails against all happiness as vice,
Whereas man's only end is happiness,
Both for himself and all humanity,
And every living thing, down to the worm
Which he hath been, and must again become:
This churl, from sheer brute malice of the heart,
Hath stopped this morn the players from The Green;
But we disguised as they will play their parts,
And thus we'll foil both his and Mandrake's plot,
And by one blow so overthrow them both:

Photo-engraved & printed by Gompel & Co.


And I'll the actress play, and show you all
The imperial power of beauty's nobleness;—
As on a winter's morn, the world fog-wrapped,
All of a sudden clear the mists away,
And trees stand forth arrayed in silver robes,
Clad in the crystal beauty of the frost,
And on them strikes the sun in jewelled blaze;
So shall my beauty flash before the world.
End of the First Scene of
the Second Act.



ACT II. SCENE II.

[Scene. A gloomy dell of firs. Canker, Adderstongue, Toadstool and a crew of imps are squatted on the ground. Enter Mandrake.]

MANDRAKE.

Well met, or rather I should hope ill-met;
For here what's well is ill, what's ill is well;
Evil's our God, and here we worship Him,
In all the thousand shapes He visits earth,
Lust, Falsehood, Avarice and Cruelty,
And sweet Revenge, the strongest of them all,—

Plate engraved & printed by Goupil & Co.

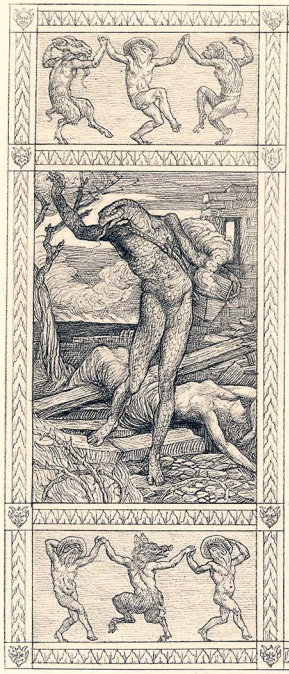
Stern joy-giver, who every wrong atones,
And yields a rapture Love has never felt,
Who pays, when Justice fails, forgotten scores
With measure that runs o'er, true leveller,
Who makes the poorest equal with the rich,
But come, proclaim what ill you all have wrought,
How fare your plots against the new-born Spring?

CANKER.

I have the canker grafted on each rose,
An army marched of grubs against the may,
Struck wheat hoar-white with mildew's leprosy,
The fungus broadcast sowed upon the fields,
And smote with murrain all the new-dropped lambs.

TOADSTOOL.

All the pear-trees in the night,
Burnt I with the East-wind's blight;
Apple-bloom with black frost bit,
Shed on vines the cuckoo-spit;
Caterpillars hatched in hordes,
Ground the wasps' and hornets' swords;
Sharpened all the brambles' teeth,
Cased the sting in nettle's sheath;
Poison brewed in henbane's cup,
Stirred the viper's venom up;
Never was there such an elf,
Truer to his worser self.



CHORUS OF IMPS.

Poison brewed in henbane's cup,
Stirred the viper's venom up;
Never was there such an elf,
Truer to his worser self.

(Dance of Imps.)

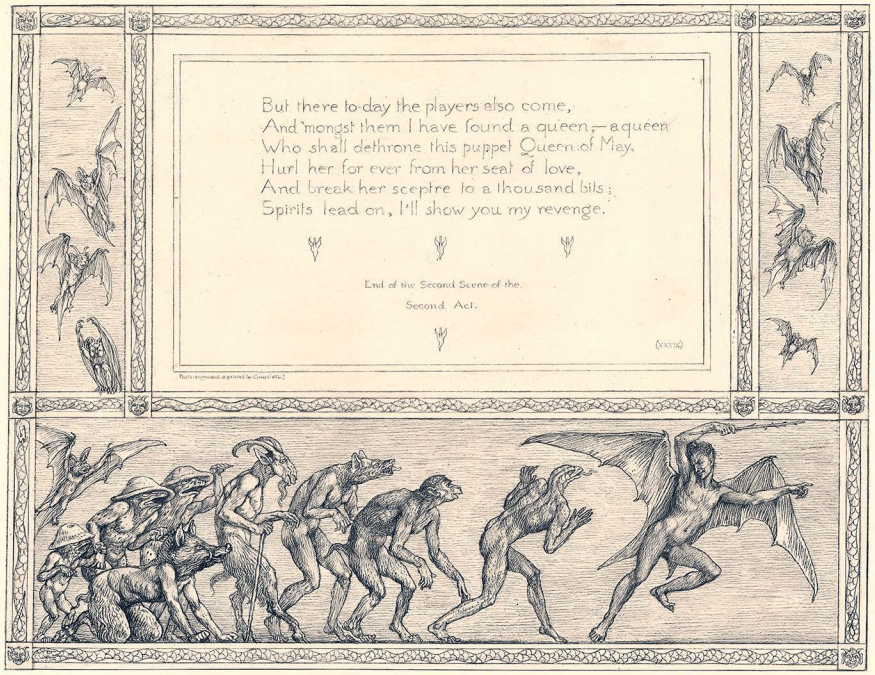
ADDERSTONGUE.

Poor sport to take our vengeance on mere flowers,
A plant can't feel or suffer half enough:
I love to sow distrust 'twixt man and man,
To blight the minds of friends with jealousy,
Graft canker on fair cheeks, and broadcast fling
The thorns and briars of passion on each heart,
Make vows of love turn into oaths of hate,
The kiss breed poison on the lover's lips,
With mask of virtue ruin innocence,
And stretch the just man on misfortune's rack.

MANDRAKE.

Well spoke! but you shall see a daintier sight,
A maid stretched on the rack of jealousy;
To day that virtuous Lilian, whom I hate,—
Hate as the bad must ever hate the good,
Hate in proportion as there's less to hate,
So being perfect I but hate her more,—
She who's love-plighted to young Laureo,
Reigns in the Forest as the Queen of May:

Photo-engraved & printed by Campbell & Co.


But there to-day the players also come,
And 'mongst them I have found a queen;—a queen
Who shall dethrone this puppet Queen of May.
Hurl her for ever from her seat of love,
And break her sceptre to a thousand bits;
Spirits lead on, I'll show you my revenge.
End of the Second Scene of the
Second Act.

ACT II. SCENE III.

(Scene. The Green in Rosedale Forest with, Maypole. Enter children, crowned with wreaths of flowers. shepherds and shepherdesses attending on Lillian and her Court. Laureo. Dry. Tattle and others.)

CHILDREN.

Our Queen of May! Hail! to our Queen of May.

LILIAN.

You sweet ones, crowned with wreaths of blue and pink,
And white and gold and every hue that blooms,
I thank you for your gracious courtesy,
That you have chosen me your Queen of May;

Photo-engraved & printed by Gaupp & Co.

And I will o'er your sports and revels reign,
And in my justice-court will pardon grant
For all your sins, except love's perjuries,
For who 'gainst love against forgiveness sins,
Or would do so, but love forgives all things.

SONG OF THE CHILDREN.

Nightingale change night for day,
All your sorrow throw away;
Robin leave your half-built nest,
Gallant, with rose at your breast;
Skylark, skylark, mount aloft,
Cloudward to your organ-loft;
Join in chorus all to-day,
Welcome to our Queen of May!

Come, all creatures, here to-day,
Hedgehog, hare, mole, fieldmouse play;
Squirrel leap with all your might,
'Till birds envy you your flight;
Glitter, insects, scale on scale!
Dance, thou knight in armour, snail!
Come all creatures here to-day,
Welcome to our Queen of May!

Photo-engraved & printed by Cowell & Co.

(The children present Lilian with a crown of flowers, and then proceed to crown her as the Queen of May.)

LILIAN.

But who taught you to make a crown like this,
Such as the Queen of Fairyland might wear?

ONE OF THE CHILDREN.

Where flows the spring close by the Thornless Rose,
Which always blossoms on the First of May,
We found this wreath and twenty more besides,
Which some of us now wear, but on this one,
Made, as you see, more richly than the rest,
Was this inscription,—"FOR THE QUEEN OF MAY."

(Gives Lilian the inscription.)

LILIAN.

Dear Laureo, this needs must be your work.

LAUREO.

I know no art to make a crown like this,
But what I could with humble skill, I've done,
And brought a posy of wild forest-flowers.

(Presents Lilian with a nosegay.)

LILIAN.

Thanks for the flowers, and thanks, too, for the crown,
For still I think that both are your fair gifts;

Photo-engraved & printed by Guest & Co.

Oh! here are flowers! bluebells, forgetmenots,
One woven from the ocean's deep dark blue,
The other from the azure of the sky;
And here are both the violets, white and blue,
Born ages since, what time the Fairy Queen
A changeling child was nursing in this wood;
Two drops fell by a beech's mossy root,
One from her breast, the other from her eyes;
Anon two scented flowers sprang into bloom,
One white as was the breast that dropped the milk,
One blue as were the eyes that shed the tear.

[Dance of the Children round the Maypole.]

LILIAN. [At the conclusion of the dance.]

The Fairies could not trip more prettily,
Nor weave their circles with a lighter foot,
So there is this for you, and this for you.

[Kisses them.]

ONE OF THE CHILDREN.

But are there really any fairies now?
I should so much a Fairy like to see;
If 'twere but only such a little one;
You promised once a Fairy tale to tell,
So will you tell it now?

[The children gather round Lilian and keep entreating.]

Plate engraved & printed by Goupil & Co.

LILIAN.

There is not time,
The players in a moment will be here;—
Dear one, do go and look where they can be;

(To Laureo.)

I feel impatient that they have not come.

(Exit Laureo.)

THE CHILDREN.

The Fairy tale! please tell the Fairy tale!
The one you promised very long ago!

LILIAN.

Well then, I'll tell you one; within this wood,
A Fairy dwells, the Queen's chief verderer;
Who guards all flowers and birds in forest-fold;
'Tis she who lights the furze's scented pyre,
On hawthorns spreads the perfumed fleece of may.
And in the mornings strings the blades of grass
With beads of light and rosaries of pearl;
And oftimes by a river's bank she sits,
And blows those golden bubbles, marigolds;
And men and fairies call her Robinet:
Sometimes she turns into a butterfly,
But if pursued, then changes to a flower,
Which when you think to gather, spreads its wings
And sails away across the meads and woods,—
But Laureo comes, and brings good news, I trust,—

(XLIV)

Dark-engraved & printed by Gangel & Co.

(Enter Laureo on one side and Marjoy on the other.)

LAUREO.

Alas! I bring the very worst of news;
The players have by Marjoy been forbid,
Marjoy who loves so much to vex each thing,
That he'd destroy the woods to vex the birds,
Or else destroy the birds to vex the woods,
He's stopped the players,—

MARJOY. (Advancing)

Yes, I've stopped the play,
No wicked play shall in this wood be played;
Pull down that heathen Maypole's trumpery;
Take off those sinful garlands from your heads.

LILIAN.

But won't you let the children sing and dance?

MARJOY.

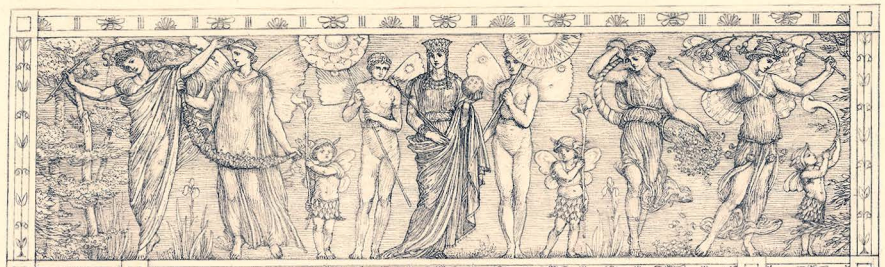
I'll have no infant orgies in this wood;
Take off those flowers and garlands from your heads.

(Marjoy attempts to pull off some of the wreaths, but only succeeds in getting one or two roses.)

Why here are roses without thorns! what vice!
That wicked Nature has a-Maying gone!

LILIAN.

But hark! but hark! what music do I hear?



(The flats draw displaying Angelica and the Fairies disguised as actresses, singing and dancing as they advance.)

MARJOY

Did I not also stop these actresses?
And now with music, song and dance they come:
Women as hard as Nature are to stop;
Oh! wicked Nature! wicked actresses!
Oh! wicked everything! I'll leave the place:
Yet wait. I'll just peep at their sinful sports.
Sin by a good man seen is not a sin,
Sin's only sin with sinners not with saints.

(Marjoy hides behind a tree, from which he occasionally keeps stealing out, making love to the actresses.)

ANGELICA. (Advancing)

As is our yearly wont, we come our rites
To celebrate in this green theatre,
With you and flowers and birds for audience.
And first we'll sing our hymn of praise to May,
And then my nymphs shall on the green-sward dance,
More light than dance the swallows hyacinth-winged,
When o'er some stream they wheel their airy waltz;
Then last the play.— HOW BEAUTY RULES O'ER ALL.

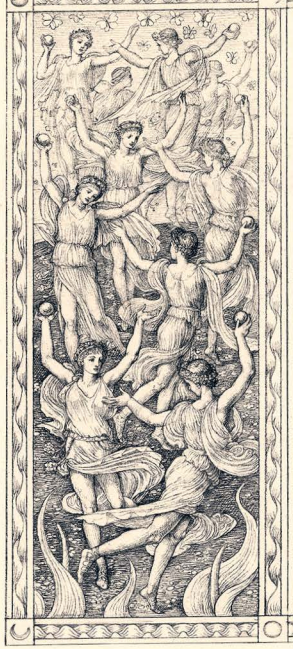
(Curtsies and retires.)

(Enter procession of Fairy-actresses, dressed in white and blue, crowned with wreaths, holding branches of may in their hands, and singing the May-song.)

MAY-SONG OF THE FAIRY-ACTRESSES.

Honour to the First of May!
Honour to the First of May!
Now the earth with beauty dower
Wind-loved grass and bee-loved flower;
Now the hawthorn blossoms bring
Beauty's harvest in the spring.
Honour to the First of May!
Honour to the First of May!

Plate engraved & printed by Griggs & Son



ANGELICA. (Again advancing)

Now, nymphs! the dance in honour of the day,
May leads the laughing morris of the spring:
For dance is Nature's universal smile,—
The rivulet goes dancing to the sea,
And dances sea to moon with its blue choir
Of waves, and dances moon in maze of light
With earth and planets round the rhythmic sun.

(Enter the ballet of the Fairy-actresses. During the dance Laureo is attracted to Angelica. Dumbshow between them. At the conclusion of the ballet Angelica carries off Laureo.)

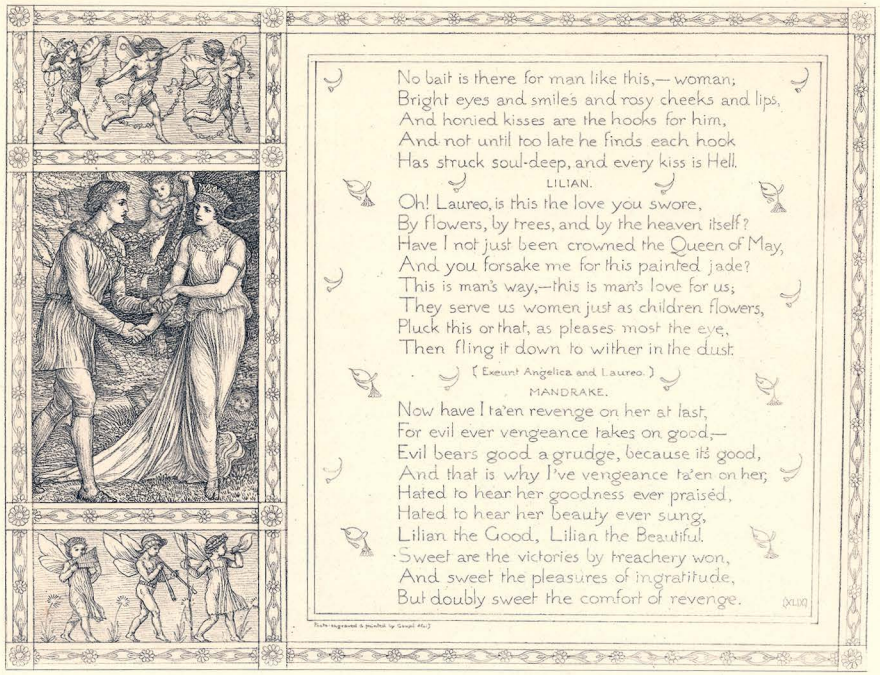
LILIAN. (When she sees Laureo carried off.)

What, dearest Laureo! Oh! what means this?
What! can you thus desert me for this jade.
This actress made of spangles and of paint,
Who, like some seeming-innocent flower,
Blooms into baits and nets to catch her prey!
Just so the moon, fair thief, holds eyes spellbound,
What time she fills the earth and heavens with light
But in whose orb dwells neither light nor life,
Nothing but coldness, rottenness and death,—
Such is this painted trull without a soul.

(Enter Mandrake and his Imps.)

MANDRAKE.

He's left his Lilian, lured by those eyes,
False lights, which many another bark have wrecked:



No bait is there for man like this,— woman;
Bright eyes and smiles and rosy cheeks and lips,
And honied kisses are the hooks for him,
And not until too late he finds each hook
Has struck soul-deep, and every kiss is Hell.

LILIAN.

Oh! Laureo, is this the love you swore,
By flowers, by trees, and by the heaven itself?
Have I not just been crowned the Queen of May,
And you forsake me for this painted jade?
This is man's way,—this is man's love for us;
They serve us women just as children flowers,
Pluck this or that, as pleases most the eye,
Then fling it down to wither in the dust.

(Exeunt Angelica and Laureo.)

MANDRAKE.

Now have I ta'en revenge on her at last,
For evil ever vengeance takes on good,—
Evil bears good a grudge, because it's good,
And that is why I've vengeance ta'en on her;
Hated to hear her goodness ever praised,
Hated to hear her beauty ever sung,
Lilian the Good, Lilian the Beautiful.
Sweet are the victories by treachery won,
And sweet the pleasures of ingratitude,
But doubly sweet the comfort of revenge.

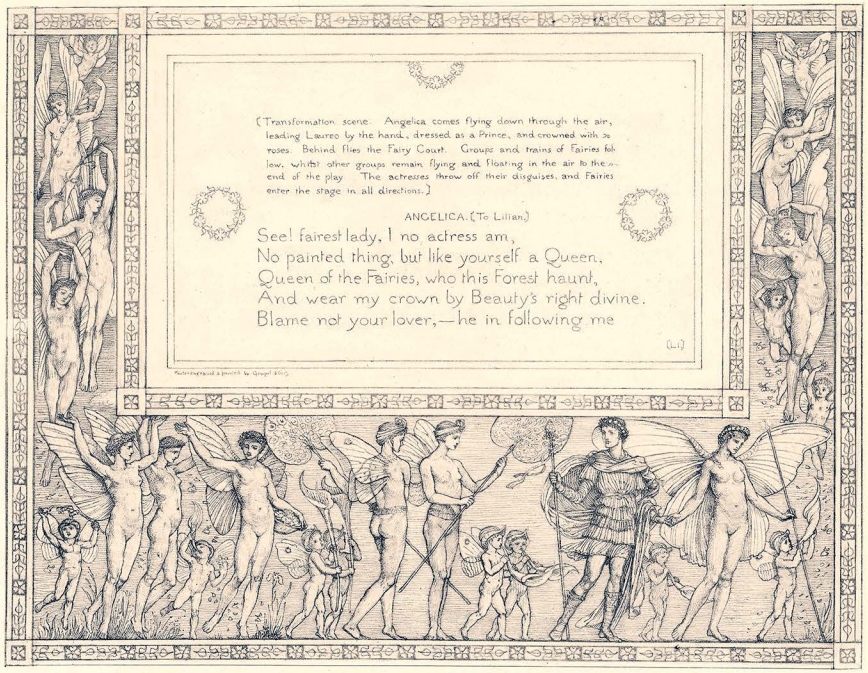
(XLIX)

Photo-engraved & printed by Gowpil &c.

LILIAN.

As well have thought to pluck the sun from heaven,
The dimple from the cheek in which 'tis set,
Light from the truth of which it is the core,
As me from him, so buried in his heart!
Oh! just as on some sunny day in spring,
Two happy birds make love upon one branch,
And all the forest rings with melody;
Then comes a frost, and all the forest's mute,
And each bird flies its way to meet no more,
Such is my love, upon a spring-day born,
Fed on his songs, and nursed on flattery;
And now this frost has come, and he is fled,
And we shall never, never meet again,
Nor ever speak, nor kiss, nor love again,
Nothing between us, save mute scorn from me.
(Pauses.)
Did he this morn not say, how loves each thing,
And is again beloved by everything,
The bee that loves the flower, the flower the light,
The light that loves and is beloved by all;
'Tis false,—here everything hates everything,
Here everything upon its fellow preys,
The bee preys on the flower, the bird preys on the bee,
And Man,—Man preys on all; bee, bird and flower,
Man is the monster robber on this earth,
Robs everything,—robs woman of her love.

Photo-engraved & printed by Goupil & Co.)



[Transformation scene. Angelica comes flying down through the air, leading Laureo by the hand, dressed as a Prince, and crowned with so roses. Behind flies the Fairy Court. Groups and trains of Fairies follow, whilst other groups remain flying and floating in the air to the end of the play. The actresses throw off their disguises, and Fairies enter the stage in all directions.]

ANGELICA. [To Lilian.]

See! fairest lady, I no actress am,
No painted thing, but like yourself a Queen,
Queen of the Fairies, who this Forest haunt,
And wear my crown by Beauty's right divine.
Blame not your lover,—he in following me

[L.I.]

Photo-engraved & printed by Gregg & Co.

Unto his higher self was only true,
For love's not love unless it beauty loves;
So loving Beauty's Queen he loves you more,
For Beauty, Love, and Virtue are all one.

(Presents Laureo to Lilian.)

MARJOY. (Coming out from his hiding-place.)

Oh! wicked Fairies! wicked actresses!
Oh! wicked everything! I'll leave the place;
This time I'll go,—'tis far too gay for me.

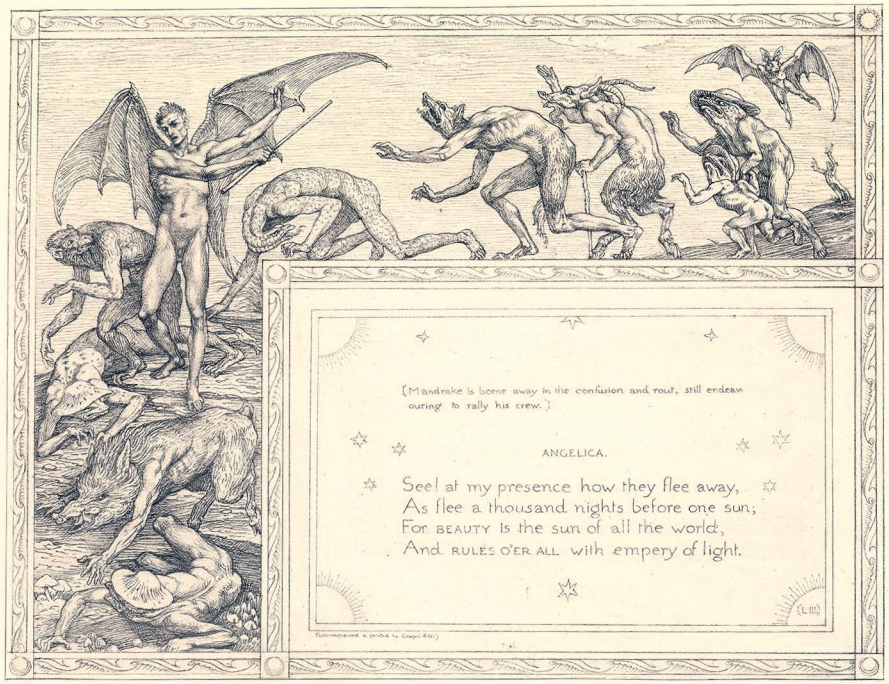
(Exit Marjoy pelted off with flowers by the elves and children.)

MANDRAKE.

Undone! just when I deemed that victory dawned.
Undone! but in defeat I'll pleasure find,
For this defeat shall only whet my rage,
And only make the joy of hate more keen:
Forgiveness is the Gospel of the Fool,
And shows a soul inanimate and tame,
Revenge for kings and is their luxury.

(Mandrakes crew of imps show signs of flight. Mandrake in vain endeavours to rally them.)

But stay my imps! fly in no rabble rout!
But as the sea at turn of tide her shrunk
Battalions marshalls white with rage,
Who from their battle-field, the shore, retreat,
Disputing every inch of sand, each weed,—



[Mandrake is borne away in the confusion and rout, still endeavouring to rally his crew.]

ANGELICA.

See! at my presence how they flee away,
As flee a thousand nights before one sun;
For BEAUTY is the sun of all the world,
And RULES O'ER ALL with empery of light.

(L. III.)

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LILIAN. (To Laureo)

Forgive me for the raging words I've spoke;
'Twas foulest jealousy that gave them birth.
That monster which destroys all virtuous thoughts,
And in their stead soul-murdering hatred breeds.
And Oh! forgive me, dearest, too, for this,
That one, one doubt should ever have my thoughts
Slipped in, thy soul's devotion to 've impeached.
But let this plea for pardon stand my friend,
I knew not who these fairy creatures were,
Nor who this gracious Queen, who o'er them reigns,
And 'tis through ignorance we always sin;
But I no longer need for pardon sue,
For I can read forgivenessupon your face;
Love's highest rapture I already feel,
That he whom I thought great is greater still.

LAUREO.

'Tis I must plead for pardon; and not you,
For I have sinned because I seemed to sin,
Although no sin have done or even thought.
A voyager I've been to Fairyland,
And seen what mortal eyes can never see;
And heard what mortal ears can never hear,
Seen Truth and Justice throned in every heart,
And love of Virtue ravishing all minds,
And Beauty puissant over everything;

(LIV)

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And strengthened thus, I now to you come back,
And all my vows to you again renew,
And life shall be the witness of their truth,
To love you as myself. So come again,
Oh! once more come again unto my arms,
And let me press thy breast unto my breast,
Heart unto heart and soul to soul betrothed.

[They embrace.]

ROBINET. [Advancing to Lilian.]

I am that Robinet of whom you spoke,
Not merely verderer of birds and flowers,
For you in youth's sweet garden I have watched
With tenderer care than all my birds and flowers.
'Twas I who warned our Queen of Mandrake's plots,
'Twas I that crown of roses wove you wear,
'Tis I will guard you in the years to come,
I Robinet the verderer of maids.

ANGELICA.

Dear lovers, you shall ever be our care,
And this shall be the token of our care,—
We'll on the spot your marriage rites perform,
And show the world the fairest of all sights,
Lovers who love because they Virtue love.

[Joins their hands.]

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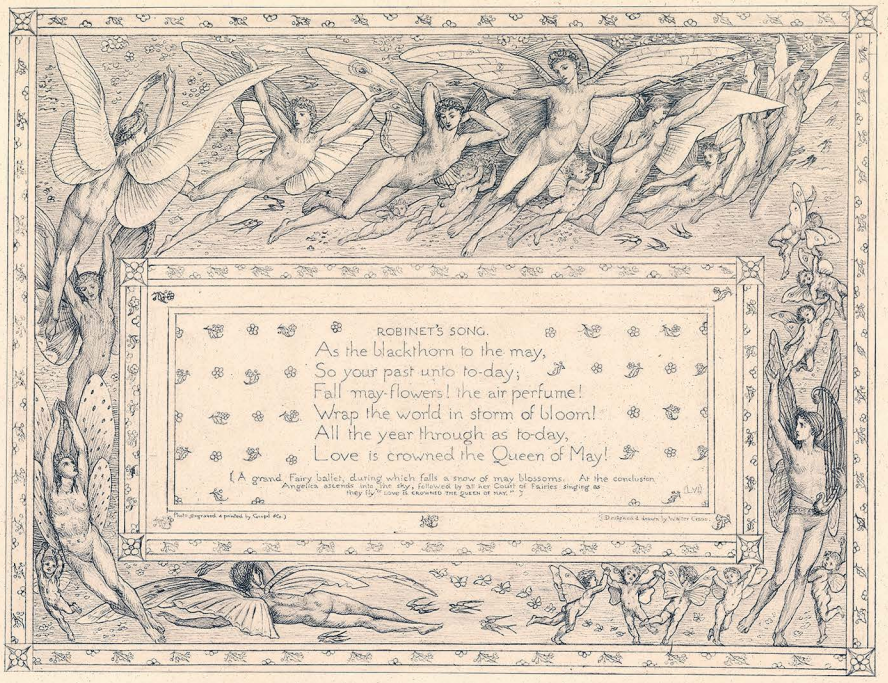
ROBINET'S SONG.
As the blackthorn to the may,
So your past unto to-day;
Fall may-flowers! the air perfume!
Wrap the world in storm of bloom!
All the year through as to-day,
Love is crowned the Queen of May!
{A grand Fairy ballet, during which falls a snow of may blossoms. At the conclusion Angelica ascends into the sky, followed by all her Court of Fairies singing as they fly "Love is crowned the Queen of May." }